

Message Text

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FOLLOWING ROME 15357 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN LONDON
PARIS DIA NATO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY NAPLES USDOCOSOUTH
SHAPE USNR MILAN SEP 20; REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: BERLINGUER REASSURES HIS FOLLOWERS MAJOR ADDRESS

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. IN A MAJOR ADDRESS TO A HUGE CROWD AT THE CONCLUSION
OF A NATIONAL PCI FESTIVAL, PCI SECRETARY-GENERAL BERLINGUER
FORCEFULLY REJECTED THE THESIS THAT HIS PARTY IS BECOMING A
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ONE. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE PCI WILL SEEK TO
ACHIEVE TRADITIONAL COMMUNIST GOALS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE
ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION. THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE OF BENEVOLENT
ABSTENTION TOWARD THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT IS DESCRIBED AS
THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE IN A TRANSITORY SITUATION.

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THE PCI DEMANDS A SIGNIFICANT POLICY VOICE NOW AND FULL PART-

ICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT SOON. WHATEVER THE EXTENT OF RANK-AND-FILE UNEASE WITH THE NEW PCI ROLE, THIS SPEECH WILL GO FAR TO REASSURE THE FAITHFUL THAT BASIC GOALS HAVE NOT CHANGED. AS THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT PUTS TOGETHER ITS STABILIZATION PACKAGE, IT HAS BEEN FORCEFULLY PUT ON NOTICE BY THE COMMUNIST LEADER.
END SUMMARY.

2. ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SECRETARY-GENERAL ENRICO BERLINGUER PRONOUNCED HIS FIRST POLITICAL SPEECH SINCE AUGUST IN FRONT OF ABOUT 300,000 PARTY FAITHFUL AND OTHER VISITORS TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE PCI'S NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF UNITY IN NAPLES. BERLINGUER TOOK THE OCCASION TO DIRECTLY CONFRONT THE WIDELY-HEARD QUESTION OF WHETHER THE PCI "IS NOT IN THE PROCESS OF PUTTING ITSELF ON THE ROAD TO BECOMING A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-TYPE PARTY." HIS ANSWER WAS A RINGING NO. THOSE WHO MISINTERPRET PCI POLICY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHILE EVOLVING INTO A NEW, MASS, NATIONAL PARTY WHICH CONTINUES TO SUPERSEDE OLD CONCEPTIONS, THE PCI "HAS REMAINED, IS NOW AND WILL STAY A COMMUNIST PARTY." THE PCI LEADER WENT ON TO SAY, "...WE MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF, EVEN FOR A MOMENT, THE ENDS FOR WHICH WE HAD OUR ORIGIN AND FOR WHICH WE FIGHT, THAT IS, THE GOALS OF EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKERS, OF ALL HUMAN SOCIETY, AND OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SOCIETY COMPLETELY AND WHOLLY SUPERIOR TO THE BOURGEOIS ONE." IN THIS EFFORT, THE PCI MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THE EXISTING POLITICAL REALITIES. PARTY CONDUCT MUST NEVER LEAD EITHER TO CONCESSIONS ON BASIC PRINCIPLES OR "MAXIMALIST" ADVENTURES.

3. BERLINGUER WENT ON TO RELATE THIS IDEOLOGICAL CONCEPTION TO THE PCI'S CONDUCT SINCE THE JUNE 20 ELECTIONS. THOSE ELECTIONS CREATED A COMPLETELY NEW GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION. THEY MADE IT POSSIBLE THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE OLD ANTI-COMMUNIST PREJUDICE. THE PCI'S DECISION TO ABSTAIN IN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WAS TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE COUNTRY FROM FALLING INTO RUIN. IF THE PCI HAD NOT ABSTAINED, ITALY WOULD TODAY EITHER BE WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT OR, MORE PROBABLY, WOULD HAVE A GOVERNMENT OF THE OLD TYPE, BASED ON EXCLUSION OF THE PCI. EITHER ONE OF THOSE SITUATIONS WOULD BE WORSE THAN THE PRESENT ONE, AND WOULD HAVE DISAPPOINTED ALL THOSE VOTERS WHO HAVE PLACED THEIR TRUST IN THE PCI.

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4. THE PCI'S NEW WEIGHT AND GREATER INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT POSE NEW PROBLEMS, BUT ARE NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE PARTY'S STRATEGY WHILE IN THE OPPOSITION. AS BEFORE, THE PARTY WILL DISPLAY A "CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE, AIMING AT AFFIRMING ITS ROLE AS A GOVERNING FORCE." THE PARTY WILL MAINTAIN "COMPLETE LIBERTY OF JUDGEMENT" ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND WILL BE A VIGOROUS FORCE OF OPPOSITION WHEN NECESSARY. NEVER WILL THE PCI

LOSE SIGHT OF ITS GOALS AND OF THE NECESSITY FOR AWAKENING THE COUNTRY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNING FORMULA AND OF THE NEED FOR MOVING FORWARD TO A UNITED COALITION GOVERNMENT INCLUDING THE PCI.

5. ADDRESSING THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WHICH CONCERN THE GOVERNMENT, BERLINGUER EMPHASIZED THAT IMPORTANCE OF HARMONIZING ALL REFORM EFFORTS TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARD REACHING THE GOAL OF "A NEW TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH ASSURES, EVEN IF GRADULLY (BUT WITHOUT DEVIATIONS), THE SOLUTION OF ITALY'S MAJOR SOCIETAL PROBLEMS -- THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE, FULL EMPLOYMENT, REORGANIZATION AND AMPLIFICATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND OF THE CIVIL STRUCTURES." NEARING HIS CONCLUSION, THE PARTY SECRETARY DWELT ON THE NECESSITY FOR MORALIZING AND DEMOCRATIZING ITALIAN SOCIETY THROUGH SOLUTIONS TO SCANDALS SUCH AS THE LOCKHEED ONE AND ESSENTIAL REFORMS, ESPECIALLY ON OBORTION.

6. BERLINGUER'S SPEECH CONTAINED SIGNIFICANT COMMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE (REPRESENTATIVES OF 47 FOREIGN COMMUNIST PARTIES AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WERE PRESENT). HE PRAISED THE TWENTY YEAR "REVOLUTIONARY EPIC" OF CUBA, THE FESTIVAL'S GUEST OF HONOR, AND UNDERLINED PCI SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AGAINST THE OFFENSIVE OF THE US-ISRAELI-ARAB RIGHTIST COALITION. A SEPARATE CABLE WILL DISCUSS BERLINGUER'S REMARKS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF MAO TSE-TUNG.

7. COMMENT. RECENT EMBASSY REPORTS (SEE ROME 15042) HAVE DISCUSSED INDICATIONS OF RANK-AND-FILE DISCONTENT WITH THE PCI DECISION TO ABSTAIN ON THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT. UP TO NOW, THE CONCRETE MANIFESTATIONS OF DISSENT WITHIN THE PCI HAVE BEEN LIMITED. WE HAVE CAUTIONED AGAINST EITHER OVERESTIMATING THE EXTENT OF UNEASE AT THE BASE OR UNDERESTIMATING THE PARTY LEADERSHIP'S ABILITY TO EDUCATE AND ORIENT THE
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PARTY FAITHFUL IN NEW DIRECTIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT, BERLINGUER'S SPEECH APPEARS BOTH AS RECOGNITION THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DISSENT EXISTS WITHIN THE PARTY AND AS AN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE OBJECTIONS OF THE DISSENTERS. IT PROVIDES REASSURANCE THAT THE PARTY HAS LOST SIGHT NEITHER OF ITS HISTORY NOR OF ITS GOALS. BERLINGUER MAKES CLEAR THAT THE PCI WILL SEEK TO INFLUENCE SIGNIFICANTLY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO STABILIZE THE ECONOMY AND REFORM ITALIAN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES. THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT ITSELF IS PLAINLY VIEWED AS A TRANSITORY CREATURE, THE LEAST OF ALL POSSIBLE EVILS, THE OLD GOALS REMAIN -- FIRST DIRECT PCI PARTICIPATION IN A UNITARY COALITION GOVERNMENT AND, ULTIMATELY, RESTRUCTURING OF ITALIAN SOCIETY ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIST MODEL. WHATEVER THE EXTENT OF INTRA-PARTY DISSENT, THIS MAJOR ADDRESS BY BERLINGUER WILL SERVE WELL ITS PROBABLE PRIMARY PURPOSES -- TO CALM THE

FEARS OF THOSE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE NEW PCI STATUS VIS-A-VIS
THE GOVERNMENT, AND TO SERVE NOTICE ON THE ANDREOTTI GOVERN-
MENT THAT PCI ABSTENTION WILL BE A CRITICAL, CONDITIONAL AND
TRANSITORY ONE. END COMMENT. VOLPE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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